

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07170 090941Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OES-07 DOE-15
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0197
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 07170

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, UR, US
SUBJECT: WEEKEND SOVIET COMMENTARY ON NEUTRON
WEAPON TAKES TOUGH LINE

SUMMARY: WEEKEND SOVIET PRESS COMMENTARY ON
PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON
ACCUSES THE U.S. OF MANEUVERING, OF ATTEMPTING TO
LINK THE FUTURE OF THE WEAPON TO EXTRANEIOUS
MATTERS, OF SEEKING TO MANIPULATE PUBLIC OPINION,
AND OF IGNORING THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR MUTUAL
RENUNCIATION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS. THIS INITIAL
COMMENTARY SUGGEST THAT MOSCOW INTENDS TO
INTENSIFY ITS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE
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RB/ER WEAPON AND IS UNPREPARED TO
DISCUSS, AT LEAST IN PUBLIC, THE POSSIBILITY OF
LINKAGE OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON WITH OTHER WEAPONS
SYSTEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET PRESS AND RADIO ON APRIL 8-9 HAVE
CARRIED WASHINGTON TASS DISPATCH DESCRIBING

PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON AS A STEP TOWARD PRODUCTION OF THIS WEAPON. TASS STATES THAT THE PRESIDENT IS ATTEMPTING TO ACHIEVE "CONCESSIONS" ON OTHER MATTERS EXTRANEOUS TO THIS WEAPON AND THAT HE DID NOT EVEN REFER TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR MUTUAL RENUNCIATION OF THE WEAPON. TASS ALSO ASSERTS THAT ONE OF THE MAIN BASIS OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WAS TO ESTABLISH A FIRMER POSITION VIS A VIS PUBLIC OPINION. TASS ALSO CARRIES AN ARTICLE REPORTING INITIAL STATEMENTS OF OPPOSITION IN THE U.S. TO THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION.

2. PRAVDA OF APRIL 9 PUBLISHES AN ARTICLE FROM NEW YORK BY T. DOLESNICHENKO, WHO STATES THAT WORLDWIDE PROTESTS HAVE FORCED THE WHITE HOUSE TO UNDERTAKE "A MANEUVER" WHICH KOLESNICHENKO CLAIMS "OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA" IS ATTEMPTING THE CHARACTERIZE AS A COMPROMISE. THIS "COMPROMISE" HE WRITES, IS OPPOSED BOTH BY "PROGRESSIVE CIRCLES" IN THE U.S. AND HAS BEEN IMMEDIATELY DENOUNCED BY SUCH "HAWKS" AS SENATORS NUNN, MOYNIHAN, AND JACKSON. KOLESNICHENKO STATES THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION DOES NOT SERVE THE REAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE U.S., REPEATED BREZHNEV'S CHARACTERIZATION AT CONFIDENTIAL

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VLADIVOSTOK OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON AS OFFENSIVE AND AS INCREASING THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR, AND CONCLUDES BY STATING THAT THIS WEAPON MUST BE BANNED. INTERNATIONAL WEEK REVIEW IN SAME PRAVDA CLAIMS THAT THE U.S. IS ATTEMPTING "TO MANEUVER" AND STATES THAT THIS QUESTION CANNOT BE SETTLED "BY MEANS OF MANEUVERS AND EQUIVOCAL "POSTPONEMENTS," BUT ONLY ON THE BASIS OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR MUTUAL RENUNCIATION.

3. COMMENT: THESE EARLY REACTIONS SUGGEST MOSCOW'S DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN ITS STANCE OF NO LINKAGE OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND TO INTENSIFY ITS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. KOLESNICHENKO'S ASSERTION THAT THE PRESIDENT MOLIFIED NEITHER THE "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" NOT THE "HAWKS" SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW MAY HOPE THAT THE DECISION IS A COMPROMISE WHICH WILL SATISFY FEW AND WHICH GIVES AMPLE TIME AND BASIS FOR A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO REVERSE THE DECISION. THIS INITIAL REACTION,

THEREFORE, WITH ITS FIRM REJECTION OF LINKAGE,
SUGGESTS A SOVIET DECISION TO PUT CONSIDERABLE
PROPAGANDA PRESSURE ON THE U.S. ON THIS ISSUE
IN COMING MONTHS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO AVOID SUB-
STANTIVE DISCUSSION OF ANY LINKAGE OF THE NEUTRON
WEAPON TO OTHER WEAPONS SYSTEMS. TOON

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